

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6488

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TAGS: OCON, ECOSOC

SUBJECT: SUMMARY: ECOSOC COMMITTEE ON HOUSING, BUILDING AND
PLANNING, NINTH SESSION, OCTOBER 13-24, 1975: FINAL
REPORT

REF: (A) GENEVA 7824; (B) GENEVA 7858; (C) STATE 246124;
(D) GENEVA 7887; (E) GENEVA 7973; (F) STATE 250222;
(G) GENEVA 8029; (H) STATE 251236; (I) GENEVA 8093;
(J) GENEVA 8101

1. SUBJECT COMMITTEE MET IN GENEVA FROM OCT. 13 TO 24.
THE COMMITTEE REVIEWED WORK PROGRAM OF CENTER
FOR HOUSING, BUILDING AND PLANNING AND THE CO-ORDINATION OF
INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES IN FIELD OF HUMAN SETTLEMENTS.
AGENDA ITEMS 4 ON THE CENTER'S R&D ACTIVITIES AND 6 ON
HIABITAT AND UN HABITAT AND HUMAN SETTLEMENTS FOUNDATION
(UNHHSF) PRODUCED GREATEST DISCUSSION; ESPECIALLY LATTER
ITEM WHICH INVOLVES QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE FUTURE OF
THE COMMITTEE AND THE CENTER. SUBJECT SESSION HAS MADE IT
CLEAR THAT COMMITTEE'S 1962 MANDATE FROM ECOSOC, (I.E.,
TO COORDINATE UN ACTIVITIES IN HOUSING AND RELATED
COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND PHYSICAL PLANNING) NO LONGER
CORRESPONDS WITH REALITY. ONE DELEGATION POINTED OUT THAT
THE COMMITTEE HAS DE FACTO CONTROL OVER ONLY ONE BODY -
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THE CENTER IN NEW YORK. IN ADDITION TO LOW-LEVEL OF

REPRESENTATION BY MEMBER NATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE, PARTICULARLY LDCS, THE FOLLOWING FACTORS CONTRIBUTED TO THE COMMITTEE'S OBVIOUS LOSS OF CONFIDENCE IN ITSELF:

(1) HABITAT, WITH ITS OWN PREPARATORY COMMITTEE, DOMINATES DISCUSSIONS ON INTERNATIONAL HUMAN SETTLEMENTS ISSUES. (IT IS NOT TOO MUCH OF AN EXAGGERATION TO SAY THAT THE COMMITTEE AND THE CENTER SPENT THE TWO WEEKS IN GENEVA "WAITING FOR HABITAT.");

(2) UNHHSF HAS BEEN GIVEN ALL OF THE CENTER'S HOUSING FINANCE RESPONSIBILITIES AND, AS THE DISCUSSION ON ITEM 6B REVEALED, THE COMMITTEE BELIEVES (OR IS AFRAID) THAT THE FOUNDATION CAN INTERPRET ITS MANDATE BROADLY AND SWALLOW OTHER ACTIVITIES OF THE CENTER. (A U.S. DRAFT RESOLUTION RECOMMENDING THAT THE CENTER BE REPRESENTED ON THE ADVISORY BOARD OF UNHHSF WAS WITHDRAWN FOR PROCEDURAL REASONS. REFTELS B, C).

(3) THE LARGE NUMBER OF UN BODIES WITH HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PROGRAMS HAS MADE CO-ORDINATION VERY DIFFICULT. THE COMMITTEE HAD NO NEW SUGGESTIONS ON WAYS TO BETTER EFFECT THE NECESSARY COORDINATION.

IN SUM, THE COMMITTEE WAS QUITE CONSCIOUS OF THE EROSION OF ITS OWN EFFECTIVENESS IN RECENT YEARS AND, IN THE ONLY UNQUALIFIED RESOLUTION TO ECOSOC THAT IT ADOPTED, THE COMMITTEE ENTERED A PLEA THAT IT AND ITS WARD, THE CENTER, NOT BE OVERLOOKED IN THE GREAT SHUFFLE EVERYONE EXPECTS AFTER HABITAT.

2. IN VIEW OF ITS LENGTH, FINAL REPORT MEETING BEING SUBMITTED AS AN AIRGRAM. ABRAMS

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